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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Note: The editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer.

### LETTERS FROM NURSES IN SERVICE

#### I.

#### WITH THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION

(Extracts from a personal letter)

Dear ——: Here I am now, belonging to the Army of Occupation. We wear the insignia on our coat sleeves. We left the base hospital at 11 p. m. on February 8. We were quite sad all the afternoon, but we had a wonderful send-off. Nearly all the nurses came to the train, and the Chief Nurse and the Colonel, and crowds of corps boys. We were driven in ambulances to the depot and really got off comfortably. My suit case is a joke, never again will I buy such a big one. I can't always get a helping hand. I know you would have laughed to see us one afternoon when we got out of the train at M., cold, dirty, etc., and had to go down two flights of stairs with a suit case in one hand, knapsacks on our backs, and in the other hand a big parcel and a lunch basket. We would not have been so loaded but, to our surprise, we had to report to Red Cross headquarters in Paris, Monday morning, and they gave us a warm trench coat (rain coat with woolen lining), two blue jersey dresses, so warm and nice to wear off duty, a nice blue jersey waist, another blue silk waist (mine was nearly in rags, patched, etc.), six new aprons, collars and cuffs. All this had to be carried somehow, so we bought knapsacks, which is the easiest way of carrying bundles. To go back to Saturday night, we slept fairly well, sitting up, of course, but first class carriages, as we are considered officers. It was bitterly cold. We reached Paris at 9 a. m. and all thirty managed to get taxis to our nice hostess house, the Petrograd Hotel. We could not live without the Y. M. and the Y. W. these days. Though very late, it was then ten o'clock, they hurried around and gave us hot chocolate, omelette and rolls. In the afternoon we went to the Albert Theatre to hear Miss Margaret Slattery speak to all women war workers, on "The hour is come." She told us that though the war is over, it is no time to hurry home till our work is done. Monday morning we spent in getting our equipment and in the afternoon four of us went to the Louvre. At 7 p. m. we left for C. The train was packed, but our friends fixed us up as best they could, two officers and six nurses in one carriage. It was dark when we went through Rheims and Chateau Thierry district, but we saw lots of things the next morning,—houses in all forms of ruin, shell holes, barbed wire, etc. We arrived at C. at midnight, Wednesday, but it was 3 a. m. before we were located. We drove around in huge army trucks and were billeted two at a time in German homes. They sent two sergeants with us to get us located. The billets are all inspected and under American control. We are not allowed to buy anything; we have army food. Most people understand a little English. The houses are spotlessly clean. That evening we went to a masquerade circus by our own boys, but we were in bed by 10 p. m. and glad to be there. This is a great life if you don't weaken. On Thursday morning we went off to see the Kaiser's palace. I have never seen such furniture and collections of things from all parts of the world. New rules have been arranged with regard to the Germans, we are not to speak to them except in the line of duty, are not to buy anything except such necessities

as soles for your shoes. The Americans have taken over a laundry and we shall be charged fixed prices for our personal clothes. We left C. at 2:30 p. m. in ambulances. It was a bitterly cold day, so we put on everything we possibly could, and then were only warm. We drove about thirty miles right up the Rhine, arriving at 6 p. m. and had a nice welcome and were taken straight to supper, very good, well cooked and piping hot. It is nice to be about 45 to meals, instead of 300. We have excellent food and whether it is change of air or not, everybody is so hungry. We appear to rank as officers now and we do appreciate our good treatment. But there are always disadvantages; we are to be absolutely military and are not to speak to corps men or patients except in line of duty. We can share the Y. M. theatre, but we must sit with the officers, not with the boys. We are, of course, most anxious to do well. At present we have but 400 patients, but there are 1000 beds, so you can guess how many men there are here. We are in a small city surrounded by hills, the hospital itself is a huge hotel. The new part was only finished in 1916 for the German men to enjoy after the war. It had never been used and when the men arrived last week, they found carpets and all tapestries up. It is spotlessly clean, all doors white, skirting, picture rails, etc. There are only five floors. I am in charge of one; it has twenty rooms, each room has doors into the hall and into the adjoining rooms, it is just fine from a nurse's point of view, and yet each room can be isolated if you wish. There are 79 beds on this floor, six in some rooms, but mostly three. There are beautiful wall papers, of course the carpets are removed. There are running water, wardrobes with full-length mirrors, beautiful lamp shades, electric bells, colored lights outside each door. The halls have flower boxes, and it is so warm. I never expected to work in such a beautiful place. The home is quite small, has only been open three days, and only the dining room and one sitting room are heated. The Major says if stoves cannot be put in our rooms he will have us moved, but we do not worry, we only sleep there. Most of the cases are pneumonia and grippe and alas! the death rate is high at present because so many of the boys have had a slight attack of gas and their lungs cannot resist pneumonia. The air is dry and cold and they get excellent food and care.

M.

## II.

### WITH THE RED CROSS IN MANCHURIA

Dear Editor: An article which I read recently about Florence Nightingale appeals to me partly because the Crimean War was in Russia and I am now in Siberia, but mostly because as I look upon the members of our unit, women from China, England, Japan and America, I know that thousands of other women are caring for the wounded all over the world, and I think how much we owe that beautiful, cultured woman who went like an angel to the Crimean War. By her example the nursing profession of to-day has been able to send hundreds of thousands of women to all parts of the world, even the remotest corners, who feel that they are doing the will of God by being a help to mankind. By her foresightedness, the wonderful world-reaching army of the Red Cross gives alms to millions of sufferers, not only to wounded soldiers, but to women old and young and to little children. We, too, see the British troops marching into Russia. In fact, it has been my privilege to have seen Chinese, Japanese, English, French, Czech-Slovaks, Russian and American, as well as a few Belgian troops, march in this war. I also have seen and nursed German prisoners of war and strange as it may seem, as patients we hardly knew the difference. Our Red Cross goes equally to all, as He who died on the Cross gave His life that all mankind might

be saved. Traveling in the 20th century cannot be compared to that of Miss Nightingale's time, ordinarily, but traveling in Russia to-day would "appal most women," but in our case, as in Florence Nightingale's, it inspires us. Hospitals in the east are not like those anywhere else, in the best of times, but during the war times they are truly "horrible." Conditions are somewhat improved since the days of post horses, open cess pools, and sewer gas, but in war work, where we depend on old barracks for hospitals, we do find rats and vermin of all kinds, and in these foreign lands, the biting fleas. We do not have to scrub floors or do the ward washing yet, but we do much harder work; we have no trained orderlies to do this work for us. The doctors and officers do not object to us. We have coöperation on all hands. Times have changed in this respect since the war days in which Florence Nightingale toiled so nobly. Doctors have learned to appreciate us, and we love and respect them, our generals. Feeding the wounded is, and always will be, a problem, I believe. Patients from different nations never will be able to partake of the same menu. In war times we cannot specialize and foodstuffs are scarce and expensive. How happy Miss Nightingale would be if she could but behold her heart's desire fulfilled in the organization of supplies. Supplies, stores, and clothing are wonderfully and abundantly furnished, thanks to our American Red Cross organization at Washington, and to the conscientious, faithful, devoted women in the homes of our motherlands. Thanks, again, to the organization, nurses of to-day do not work twenty hours a day. But it is needless to say we all work overtime, but when we know we are really serving, it is only play, not work. Encouraging and cheering the sick and wounded is our part in the war work to-day, as much as in Florence Nightingale's time. In fact it has even a larger scope than simply cheering the sick at heart, as is every good nurse's duty in war time or in peace; to-day Red Cross nurses are a large instrument in the propaganda work of nations. One of our greatest duties is to make these foreigners understand our ways. This is particularly hard where a different language is spoken, but it is interesting to see how, by some little kindness, a heart may be touched, and a smile won, without a word being spoken. The spirit of love is universal. When we know that God is Father of us all, we do not need to wonder. We do not aim to have our patients' gratitude; our aim is to save every life that we are able to, so that that soul may live to thank Him who taught us to be kind. Personally, every one of us prays to God that He will spare us to help those who fall, that humanity may stand, and to keep us all pure and good, faithful to the last; so shall we make the nursing profession a living monument to her who strove so patiently, so beautifully.

G. P. C.

(Written on Night Duty, somewhere in Siberia.)

#### WHAT SHALL WE DO?

Dear Editor: I have been reading with a good deal of interest the proposals for shortening the period of training for nurses, and thus making them more available for the person of small income. This discussion raises several questions of vital importance to nurses. One of the best articles on this subject was written by Edna L. Foley, superintendent of the Chicago Visiting Nurse Association, for the *Chicago Tribune*. Miss Foley, who knows nursing problems in Chicago, stated that any solution of the problem would have to deal with the fact that less than 6 per cent of the people of Chicago paid an income tax. That statement startled me! An income tax these days starts at a pretty low figure. We paid one, and we have to count our pennies. So I know from experience